IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

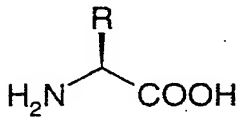
Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A process for preparing enantiomerically enriched L-α-amino acids or their salts, comprising [[by]] reacting the corresponding 2-ketocarboxylic acid with an ammonium ion donor in the presence of a whole-cell catalyst ~~which comprises~~ comprising a cloned gene encoding a cofactor-dependent amino acid dehydrogenase and a cloned gene encoding an enzyme ~~which~~ that regenerates the cofactor, at a total input of substrate per reaction volume of ≥ 500 mM, ~~with~~ the addition of the substrate being metered such that the stationary concentration of 2-ketocarboxylic acid is less than 500 mM and the external addition of cofactor, based on the total input of substrate, corresponds to < 0.0001 equivalents.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): The process as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein

no cofactor is added to the reaction mixture.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The process as claimed in claim 1 ~~and/or 2~~, ~~characterized in that~~

~~use is made of~~ wherein the 2 ketocarboxylic ~~acids which~~ is one that will yield an amino ~~acids~~ acid of the general formula (I)



(I)

in which R is alkyl, in particular a space-filling branched alkyl group ~~which~~ that exhibits a tertiary C atom and possesses 5-10 C atoms, for example tert-butyl, [[and]] or substituted ~~alkyls~~ alkyl.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The process as claimed in ~~one or more of the preceding claims,~~

~~characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein

the substrate is metered [[in]] in accordance with a fed batch process.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The process as claimed in ~~one or more of the preceding claims,~~

~~characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein

the 2-ketocarboxylic acid is kept at a maximum stationary concentration of less than 450 mM, very preferably of less than 400 mM.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The process as claimed in ~~one or more of the preceding claims,~~

~~characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein

before it is used, the whole-cell catalyst is pretreated such that the permeability of the cell membrane for the substrate and products is increased as compared with the intact system.